

REVISITING THE NIGERIAN STATE HEGEMONY AND OIL RESOURCE CONFLICT IN THE NIGER DELTA: ISSUES AND PROSPECTS

Samuel I. ODOH, Ph.D. & Fidelis C. NNAJI

Department of Political Science, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

odohsamuelituma@yahoo.com; nnajistarmark@gmail.com

Abstract

The protracted resource control struggle and the attendant conflict in the oil-rich Niger Delta of Nigeria has remained a subject of constant discourse. This study therefore sets out to problematize and interrogate the origin and nature of the struggle, its political dynamics and legal implications vis-à-vis-the Nigeria state's policy and politics over the governance of land and oil resources. The study utilized documentary method of data collection and analysed its data using content analysis technique. The post-colonial state theory formed the theoretical anchor of analysis. The paper argues that as a predator, the Nigerian state has assumed the status of an all-powerful institution and this explains why its legislations and coercive governance of natural resources facilitated its usurpation of the resource rights of the people of Niger Delta and every other parts of the federation. The study recommends for democratic resource governance that will address the agitations of fair share of oil proceeds, fiscal autonomy, balanced federal structure and devolution of powers.

Keywords: *State Hegemony, Oil Resource, Conflict, Niger Delta, Resource Control.*

Introduction

The petroleum industry occupies a pivotal place in the annals of Nigerian political economy. Between 1956 when oil was discovered in Nigeria's Niger Delta to 1958 when its commercial status became confirmed, the hitherto agrarian and relatively quiet Niger Delta gradually metamorphosed into a conflict hotspot. This signalled a change in statusquo and consequent agitation for resource control. One of the highlights in the representation made by the Ijaw people of the area to the Willink Commission of 1957 included the agitation for resource control (Ako & Okonmah, 2009). However, the Willink Commission's Report attracted response from the immediate post-independence government which established the Niger Development Board (NDDDB) in 1960 to handle the development needs and challenges of the region. Due to negligible achievement of the board, there was a renewed agitation for increased Federal attention to the development needs of the people. The Shehu Shagari administration set up a Presidential Task Force Account popularly known as the 15 Percent Committee in 1980

and set aside 15% of the Federation Account for the Commission to tackle the development problems of the Niger Delta. Also, four of the eleven River Basin Development Authorities created by the Shagari administration were domiciled in the region, they include; the Niger River Basin Development Authority, Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority, Benin-Owena River Basin Development Authority and Cross River Basin Development Authority (Akanmu, Eluwa & Ekpo, 2013).

Be this as it may, the above authorities like the ones that existed before them achieved little or nothing as their board members are often enmeshed in corruption and partisan political interests. In 1992, the military regime of Ibrahim Babangida created the Oil Mineral Producing Development Commission (OMPADEC) to address the deficiencies of the preceding bodies. Though, OMPADEC appeared better equipped to make some impact on the development of the region but subsequently suffered from problems arising from lack of a master plan, inadequate funding and unfavourable political interference (Akpomuvie, 2011 cited in Agudiegwu & Ezeani, 2017). The Sani Abacha military regime eventually upheld the recommendation of the 1995 Constitutional Conference which adopted the setting aside of 13 percent from federation account as derivation revenue in the sharing of the Federation Account Revenue to assist the development of the development of oil-producing communities. This was subsequently entrenched in the 1999 constitution (Amuwo, et al., 1998:234).

With emphasis on the principle of derivation, it is imperative to note that it has been reduced several times ever since the discovery and exploitation of oil, neglect of agriculture and solid minerals. The principle of derivation in Nigeria had kept dropping from 100% to 50% in the early 1960's, 45% in the 1970, 25% in 1977, 5% in 1981 and 3.5% in 1984. It, however, began to rise under the General Babangida military regime in 1992 up to the current 13%. The derivation principle/formula under the 1963 constitution of Nigeria with fiscal federalism in which the then federating regions owned, controlled and developed the natural resources endowed in their respective regions and thereby remitting an agreed percentage of their respective revenues to the federal/central government as tax for the maintenance of common and essential services for defence, foreign affairs, customs, foreign relations among others. The allocation principles currently used include: Population, Land Terrain, Internal Revenue Generation, Land Mass, Population Density and Derivation of not less than 13% of the total revenue accruing from any natural resource (Section 162 (2) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria).

The way Nigerian federalism is structured gives concern, particularly to the minor ethnic groups within the nation. The Niger Delta people's call for a national conference

and ceaseless agitation for resource control is simply questioning the very foundation of the Nigerian nation as presently constituted. Nigerian federalism differs from the ways in which successful federal nations operate. Every successful federation e.g. USA with its functioning political entities agreed to come together and laid down the conditions of their political union, deciding what rights, privileges and authority they would relinquish to a central government.

Theoretical Foundation of the Study

The theoretical underpinning of this study is situated and analysed within the framework of the theory of Post-Colonial State. Essentially, the state is an expression of the unity of various institutions in the society which crystallizes the total class relations in that society. These relations are ones of domination and subordination (Ekekwe, 1986:1). In Max Weber's terms, the state is that organization that, supposedly, claims a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory which may include the armed forces, civil service or state bureaucracy, courts and police. Laski (1961:1) sees the state as the crowning point of the modern social edifice and its character reveals it as a method that regulates the lives of men.

Accordingly, Oyovbaire (1980:3) argued that as government and regime, the state is the organizational instrument of society, which provides it with the necessary cohesive factor and maintains its unity of existence. Succinctly captured, the state is an objective force that holds the society together. The role of the state is many and varied, but the chief responsibility of the state is the maintenance of social and political order. It is within this order that the process of class exploitation and subordination takes place. Marx and Engels further argue that the state emerges as a result of class struggle and is used as an instrument of a ruling class to assert its interests.

From the foregoing, the hallmark of the state as the guarantor of security and stability is the level of its autonomy from social classes in the society. The state's relative autonomy is dynamic, being a function of the ongoing class struggles in the social formation (Ekekwe, 1986:10). By autonomy is meant that the institutional mechanisms of domination are constituted in a way that they enjoy independence from the society and social classes, and appear as objective force standing alongside the society (Ibeanu, 2005:15). In other words, a state can be said to be autonomous if it can independently formulate public policies and ensure effective compliance and execution without undue resort to the use of force. It is such autonomy that allows the state the capacity to act with little or no undue interference from vested interests (Aremu & Omotola, 2007:60).

It is against this backdrop that Alavi (1972:257) argued that the essential problem about the state in the post-colonial societies stems from the fact that it is not established by an ascendant native bourgeoisie but instead by a foreign capitalist bourgeoisie.... The class basis of the postcolonial state is, therefore complex. Accordingly, Ifesinachi (2006:21-22) notes that:

The Nigerian state emerged as a product of the extension of the capital from Europe to other lands in the 1860s. The motive of monopoly capital was cantered primarily on profit maximization. In the process, monopoly capitalism tended to de-emphasize transformation of pre-capitalist social relations. The consequence is the persistence of a medley of disparate pre-capitalist social relations and institutions that defines the state, and this has become part of the ideological ensemble of the post-colonial state of Nigeria.

Built by conquest and subjugation, the state has never acquired any enduring legitimacy or trust from the various indigenous groups and nationalities. Since the colonial state was for its subjects, at any rate, an arbitrary power, it could not engender any legitimacy even though it made rules and laws profusely and propagated values. It presented itself as an apparatus of violence, had a narrow social base, and relied for compliance on coercion rather than authority (Ake, 2003:3). As a result, the post-colonial Nigerian state was coercive, primarily in order to establish power and attain narrow economic objectives (Falola, 1998:52). This is essentially because the Nigerian state lacks the autonomy from vested interests both locally and externally. The ruling class derived both its origin and wealth from the state.

As a result, the Nigerian state not only lacks the capacity to set the frameworks for action in society, but even where and when it does, such frameworks most often appear to be inadequate. The effect is that its policies are enforced with difficulties where they enacted at all, with deep-rooted legitimacy crisis to bargain (Osaghae, 1980:33). The post-colonial Nigerian state has become entangled in resource contestations and violent conflicts to the extent that its neutrality and legitimacy has become suspect.

In applying the basic assumptions of this theory to the present study, we note that the alliance between metropolitan bourgeoisie and the Nigerian State in the Niger Delta has become one characterised by protection of multinational interest. The principal

position of the Nigerian State and metropolitan bourgeoisie in the oil business across the oil rich region of the Niger Delta is the maximisation of profit in spite of total degradation of the environment.

The Nigerian State rakes billions of naira from the sale of petroleum products on a daily basis. It is also very unfortunate that the elites in the Niger Delta collaborate with the Federal Government to cart away resources meant for the public. The level of corruption among leaders of this nation due to oil discovery in the Niger Delta areas is very inconceivable and unimaginable. The people of the Niger Delta live in abject poverty without good network of roads and no access to social facilities such as electricity supply, portable water, health, education, etc. Accordingly, Nwosu (2009:1) succinctly puts it that the interest of the Nigerian State in the Niger Delta is mindless exploitation without regard to the feelings of the people. There is nowhere else in the world where the people that generate over 85 per cent of the national income do not benefit more than others, except in Nigeria due to greed and the desire to accumulate the benefits of oil into private pockets on the part of leaders. There is need to correct the anomaly with haste to enable them benefit from the gift of God.

Methodology

Methodologically, the study relied on data generated from documentary sources such as journals, official publications, book chapters, newspapers and magazines as well online materials. Essentially, the method of data analysis employed for the study was content analysis technique. The study sought to achieve a coherent analysis with a focus on emphasis on regime by approaches to the Niger Delta question.

State Hegemony and Political Dynamics of the Niger Delta Conflict

The hegemonic tendencies of the Nigerian state in the Niger Delta are deeply rooted in the post-colonial political and administrative institutions of the country. Thus, as a product of Western capitalism, there emerged an inseparable alliance between the Nigerian state and external imperialists represented by oil multinational corporations which as a consequence reduced the independence of the national government in the control and utilization of its resources (Nwosu, 2009). Indeed, the Nigerian state has been fingered as the prime perpetrator of the intractable violent conflict in the Niger Delta; having been created to protect its population from exploitation, it rather engages in an alliance with the external imperialists to further exploit the citizenry. The oil exploration, production and marketing by the multinational oil companies breed acute contradictions and conflicts between Nigerian government in partnership with the oil companies on one hand and the oil producing communities who continually agitate that

the compensation paid to them is comparatively far below the huge chunk of oil proceeds flowing from the region (Adedoyin, 1991 & Darah, 2001).

Essentially, the civil war was fundamentally an oil war, and the victor was quick to take control of the booty. According to Obi (1998: 265) "it is however important to note that fiscal centralization was partly informed by the lesson of the civil war: to reduce the power of the regions and prevent them from being strong enough to challenge the centre, ensuring that a 'neutral' centre could mediate relations and provide equal access to resources to all the tiers in the pursuit of balanced development". There was also the feeling that with huge crude oil revenue that could accrue to the oil-producing states, there would be the tendency for them to be very powerful even more than the federal government. These factors made the federal government under the military regime to lay less emphasis on the principle of derivation as a means of sharing revenue. Mbanefoh and Egwaikhide (1998:223) opine that "with the emergence of oil, the antagonists of the use of derivation increased with rapidity. The core of their arguments was that derivation excessively favours the oil-producing states". Scanty regard was given to the people on whose land the oil was lifted and all through the oil boom years lasting to 1980, they were conspicuously absent when it came to allocating infrastructure and scanty social amenities. Indeed, one of General Gowon's key advisers in the Federal Civil Service, Mr. Philip Asiodu made the cynical remark that the people of Niger Delta could do nothing to change their state of affairs because they were numerically insignificant in the Nigerian scheme of things (Ngboyebi, 2015: 4)

In the Tactical redistribution/allocation of federal resources, government distribution of the resources is influenced by its desire to maintain power and so resources are distributed with the objective of getting hold of and consolidation of political and voting powers (popularity). The Regional governments of the First Republic were almost fiscally self-dependent from 1954-66. They were thus fiscally powerful vis-à-vis the federal government and in reality, as the central/federal government played limited roles compared to the regional governments (Amuwo, et al., 1998:251). Shares from the 26.72%. The allocation formula of revenue among governments in Nigeria included 60%: 30%: 10% (1977); 53%: 35%: 10% (1985); 48.5%: 24%: 7.5% (1997) which reflected federal hegemony over the other levels of the federation (Amuwo, et al., 1998:268).

Similarly, in 1989, the federal government agreed to a formula for the central government - 50%, states - 30%, local governments - 15% and special funds - 5%. This was together with allocation principles among the states as: equality - 40%, population -

30%, land mass - 10%, social development - 10% and internal revenue effort - 10% (Onuoha and Nwanegbo, 2007:146). It is noteworthy that at those respective times, the federal government had taken 55% (1981), 50% (1990) and 48.5% (1992). A new sharing formula through Modification Order Act In July, 2002 provided for revenue sharing as Federal Government – 54.68% (FG 48.5%, FCT 1%, Derivation and Ecology 1.46%, Stabilisation Fund 0.72% and Minerals Development 3%); States 24.72; and Local Governments 20.60%. The Act was further modified under the Obasanjo regime in 2004 which brought the current sharing formula of Federal Government 52.68% (FG 48.5%, FCT 1%, Derivation and Ecology 1%, Stabilisation 0.50% and Natural Resources Development 1.68%); States Governments 26.72 (Equality 40%, Population 30%, land Mass and Terrain 10%, Social Development 10% and Internal Revenue Generation 10%) and Local Governments 20.60% (Suberu in Loughlin, et al., 2013:420).

This makes the central (federal) government to have more control of the resources allocated as many have lamented that the Nigerian state represented by the federal (central) government has over the years managed the national wealth and resources with a firm hold of both the revenue and resources (Watts in Loughlin et al. 2013:31). The oil producing states (Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-Rivers, Delta, Imo, Ondo and Rivers) also enjoy 13% as derivation in addition to their respective shares from the 26.72% (Lubeck & Michael, 2007). From the foregoing, it is deducible that the desire to establish effective control over oil during and after the war was a deliberate one, hence the federal government dominated by the northern and western faction of the ruling class sought to device legislations that would ensure the federal monopoly of the collection and sharing of oil revenue. Of important note in the hegemonic tendency of the Nigerian state over the control of the fiscal basis of oil revenue is the decree 51 of 1996 which vested in the federal government the entire ownership and control of petroleum resources in or upon land in Nigeria; under the territorial waters of Nigeria and all lands forming part of the continental shelf (Etikertse, 2000). Successive military juntas and civilian administrations permitted transnational oil companies such as Shell, Agip, Chevron, Mobil, Elf, among others to unfairly procure communal lands for oil exploitation in the Niger Delta area, attacking the rights of local populations and causing irreparable damages to the environment. The Niger Delta became an example of a disaster zone per excellence. According to Green Peace cited in Ikejiani-Clark (2009: 255): since the beginning of Shell's operations in the Niger Delta, the company has wreaked havoc on neighbouring communities and their environment. Many of its

operations and materials are outdated, in poor condition, and would be illegal in other parts of the world.

It was against this form of manipulation by the oil multinationals in collaboration with the Nigerian State that led to communal agitation in the oil communities in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The best known of these agitation groups, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People MOSOP emerged in 1988, with Garrick Leton, a former Federal Minister as President, while Chief E.N. Kobanin, Rivers State's former Commissioner for Education, was his vice. Kenule Saro-Wiwa also a former commissioner was the spokesman and publicity secretary of the organization (Nwosu, 2009). Accordingly, in 1990 the Ogoni people under the leadership of the Ogoni Central Union presented their Ogoni Bill of Rights to the Federal Government of Nigeria. The bill was clearly a call to arms by the leadership of MOSOP against the Nigerian Government. MOSOP wanted autonomy for the Ogoni people and the reparation of the \$30 billion dollars of oil money taken out of Ogoni land (Ibeanu, 1997). Due to continuous agitation of the MOSOP, Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni eight were executed by hanging in November 10, 1995 by the Abacha military junta. The execution led to a global outcry and the actual trial was widely condemned for falling far below internationally recognised standards of fairness. As a result, limited sanctions were imposed on the Nigerian Military Government by the European Union and the United States, while the country was suspended from the Commonwealth and consequently condemned to a pariah state by the International community especially the West.

Table 1: Pipeline vandalism death toll in selected states between 1998 and 2006.

Month	Year	Number Of Deaths	State
October	1998	1,000	Delta
March	2000	50	Abia
June	2003	105	Abia
July	2003	300	Warri
September	2004	60	Lagos
December	2004	20	Lagos
May	2006	150	Lagos
December	2006	269	Lagos

Source: Ihesiaba (2008).

Table II: Selected Cases of Oil Related Clashes in the Niger Delta.

S/N	Date	Place and Incidence of Violent Clash
1	2003	At Irri, Isoko South Local Council, a traditional ruler was alleged to have sold the rights of the community to Agip oil. This sparked off violence and the traditional ruler had to run away from his home. community.
2	15 January, 2003	The Ohoror-Uwheru community in Ughelli North Local Council was attacked by a detachment of soldiers from the Joint Security Task Force Operation Restore Hope.
3	21 March, 2003	While the security task force was on patrol, it carried out an operation which led to the death of indigenes of Oporosa on the Escravos creek and property worth millions of naira were vandalised. A reprisal attack by the youths led to the attack of a team of 17 JTF speedboats which recorded the killing of three Soldiers and one naval rating.
4	22 March, 2003	Armed Youths stormed a military task force base at the Total Final ELF tank farm in Oponami village, killing five soldiers, while destroying property worth billions of naira.
5	7 November, 2003	Eight mobile policemen were reportedly killed by rampaging youth between Otuan and Oporoma in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State
6	April 2004	Five persons including two Americans (staff of Chevron Texaco) were killed by militant youths. They were among nine people traveling in a boat along Benin River, West of Warri, when they came under what was described as unprovoked attack
7	January, 2004	Suspected Itsekiri militants invaded some communities in Okpe Kingdom, killing 17 people and injuring three others.
8	14 April, 2004	Ijaw youths attacked and killed four children including a 90 years old community leader, Madam Mejebi Ewuruwo, in Koko, Headquarters of Warri North Local Council, Delta State.
9	23 April, 2004	Nine members of the Joint Security Task Force, 'Operation Restore Hope' in charge of security in Warri were killed by militant Ijaw youths.
10	2 November, 2004	For several hours, youth of Igbudu and soldiers of the Joint task Force clashed in Igbudu area of Warri Delta State.

11	18 November, 2004	Ijaw youths from Odioma community in Brass Local Government Area of Bayelsa State protested an alleged violation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), shut down and occupied its 8000 barrel per-day production station.
12	22 November, 2004	At least 17 youths of Ijaw extraction were confirmed dead as soldiers deployed to guard a flow station belonging to an oil-servicing firm shot sporadically into a crowd.
13	28 November, 2004	Ijaw youths clashed with soldiers at Beneseide flow station, near Ojobo in Bayelsa State over breach of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
14	23 December, 2004	The youths in Ogbe-Osewa and Ogbeilo quarters in Asaba clashed over a land dispute. Over 100 houses were ransacked, with property running into millions of Naira. destroyed.
15	23 December, 2004	In Ekpan, Uvwie Local Council of Delta State, youths clashed over the appointment of Unuevworo (traditional head) of the community.
16	24 December, 2004	Militant youths kidnapped 16 oil workers including a Yugoslav at Amatu Community in Ekeremor Local Council of Bayelsa State. They were kidnapped from a vessel identified as Seabulk, owned by an oil-. Servicing firm working with shell.
17	26 December, 2004	Alleged similar breach of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by Shell Petroleum Development Company led to the abduction of a Croatian worker, Mr. Ivan Roso, at the company's Sea Eagle floating crude oil production facility.
18	21 December, 2005	Explosion rocked shell pipelines in the Niger Delta.
19	22 December, 2005	Fire raged in Shell installation causing 13 deaths.
20	22 December, 2005	Explosion rocked shell pipelines in the Niger Delta.
21	16 January, 2006	Militants attacked another Shell platform and torched houseboats.
22	16 January, 2006	Fourteen soldiers were killed in a shootout with militants in the Niger Delta.
23	18 January, 2006	Soldiers and Bayelsa militants engaged in gun duel.
24	29 January, 2006	Oil workers threatened to pull out of the Niger Delta region.

Source: The United Nations Human Development Programme(UNDP)2008.

The Amnesty Option and Moment of Relative Peace in the Niger Delta

Following the emergence of Yar'adua as Nigeria's President, there was a paradigm shift from draconian approach to use of dialogue approach to the management of the oil conflict in the region. Thus, Yar'adua summoned the political will and offered amnesty to the militants on June 25th, 2009 along with vocational training and cash payments to nearly 30,000 militants, at a yearly cost of about \$500 million (Onuoha, 2016). The programme was designed for the militants to renounce violence, lay down their arms and surrender such arms to the authorities. Having done that, the federal government agreed to initiate an amnesty programme to rehabilitate and train the ex-militants on various vocation/career modules in Nigeria and other selected countries abroad.

At the initial stage of the amnesty programme, the ex-militants up to the figure earlier mentioned above signed on for the rehabilitation and training scheme and the life-span of the programme was pegged at five years. This constituted the phase I of the amnesty programme. The phase II centred on infrastructural development of the Niger Delta region. The imperative of the latter phase was predicated on the glaring havoc and environmental damage occasioned by constant oil exploitation and production in region. The phases I and II of the amnesty programme were designed to address the root causes of the crisis in the Niger-Delta by empowering the people, taking care of the environment and making them to have sense of belonging in the Nigerian State project. Essentially as would be expected, the amnesty programmed quickly brought relative peace to the region, and petroleum exports increased from about 700,000 barrels per day (bpd) in mid-2009 to about 2.4 million bpd in 2011.

However, when President Yar'Adua died back in May, 2010, the succeeding administration of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan did not only continue and sustain the amnesty programme, but also went ahead to grant pipeline surveillance contract to some ex-militant leaders such as Asari Dokubo, Gen. Ebikabowei "Boyloaf", Victor Ben, Ateke Tom and Government Ekpumopolo (alias Tompolo). This singular strategy paid off especially in lieu of the fact oil revenue has become central to the state economy, accounting for some 80 percent of government revenue, 95 percent of foreign exchange and 40 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Tell cited in Onuoha, 2016). The decision by President Jonathan to extend the amnesty programme to December 2017 longer than its initial expected expiration in December, 2015.

Buhari's Paradigm Shift and the Resurrection of Full Blown Militancy

Suffice it to state that the amnesty programme recorded huge success but tensions resurfaced following President Buhari's May 2015 inauguration speech, which revealed

his plans to significantly curtail funding of the amnesty programme. As a result, there was complete uncertainty surrounding the continuity of the already established Presidential Amnesty Programme. Buhari's body language quickly became apparent when in June, 2015 he terminated the ex-militants' pipeline security contracts and the government began prosecution against the former militant leader, Tompolo, for contract fraud. At the same time, he proceeded to cut funding for the amnesty programme by around 70 percent in the present 2016 budget. This development coupled with sheer government neglect to properly address local grievances in the Niger Delta once again led to new wave of militancy. The ex-militants were in a state of suspended-animation as their monthly stipends were no longer forthcoming and some of them who were still in schools both home and abroad no longer received their school fees to the extent that their various institutions threatened or even sent some.

In a bid to score some political points in his anti-corruption agenda, Buhari's further extended his drag net of prosecution for fraud on such persons as the former NIMASA DG, Patrick Ziakede Akpobolokemi and a former coordinator of the Amnesty Programme; Kingsley Kuku, among others. This was followed by another executive fiat by the Buhari administration which ordered the suspension of the take-off date of the Maritime University sited in Okerenkoko in Delta State. It was against this backdrop that a new wave of militancy resurrected once again in the Niger Delta. Stratfor (2016) noted that despite the threat by President Buhari deal decisively with the Niger Delta militants, it did not deter the emergence of a new militant separatist group, the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) on 3rd February, 2016.

Table III: Violent attacks perpetrated by the Niger Delta Avengers between February and June, 2016

S/N	DATE	Oil Installation(s) Attacks
1	February 10, 2016	Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) Blew up the Bonny Soku Gas Line which carries natural gas to the Nigeria Liquified Natural Gas Plant at Gbaran.
2	February 14, 2016	Niger Delta Avengers carried out a devastating attack on one of the most strategic pipelines in the Nation's energy network, the Trans Forcados Pipeline (TFP), which transports oil, water and associated gas from fields in the western Delta to the 400,000 bpd Forcados oil terminal.
3	February 19, 2016	Clough Creek Tebidaba Agip Pipeline Manifold in Bayelsa state was heavily struck by the NDA.
4	May 4, 2016	NDA struck and blew up the Chevron Valve Platform Located at Abiteye.

5	May 5, 2016	Chevron well D25 in Abiteye major pipeline feeding Warri and Kaduna refineries was struck by the NDA.
6	May 13, 2016	Chevron pipeline bombed at two separate spot near a military location.
7	May 20, 2016	Escravos Gas Pipeline and a facility of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC in Delta State.
8	May 25, 2016	NDA Struck Chevron main electricity feed pipeline to the Escravos Tank Farm at Ciera Creek in Warri south-west local Government Area of Delta State.
9	May 27, 2016	Nembe1, 2 and 3 Brass to Bonny trunk line belonging to the Nigerian Agip Oil Company, NAOC and Shell Petroleum Development Company, SPDC in Bayelsa State were destroyed at about 2:15 am on Saturday.
10	May 27, 2016	NNPC Gas and crude truck line in Warri were blown at 11:45 pm.
11	May 31, 2016	Chevron oil RMP 23 and RMP 24 believe to be the company's highest swamp producing oil well were blown up at about 3:44am.
12	June 1, 2016	A twin-attack was carried out on Well RMP 23 and RMP 24 owned by Chevron Nigeria Limited, located at Dibi in Warri Area of Delta State.
13	June 2, 2016	At about 2:00 am, the Ogboinbiri to Tebidaba creek crude oil pipeline in Bayelsa State
14	June 3, 2016	At about 3:00 am, the SPDC Forcados 48'' Export line in Delta State was blown up, because the company went ahead with repair works against its warning.
15	June 3, 2016	At about 3:30 am, a strike team blew up the Brass-Tebedaba crude oil line in Bayelsa State.

Sources: 1. Vanguard, June 11, 2016, p. 6.
2. Dode & Egugbo (2017, p.118-123).

The above table shows that despite President Buhari's suppressive military approach, the activities of the Niger Delta Avengers and other groups in that areas have caused a lot of damage to oil installations causing serious reduction in crude oil production which invariably affects adversely the revenue accruing to Nigeria from the export of crude oil. Owing to recent attacks on critical infrastructure, Nigeria's oil production plummeted from 2.2 million barrels per day (bpd) with an estimated loss of about N2.79 billion (\$14 billion) daily due to the closure of Exxon-Mobil - operated Qua Ibo terminal. This was also compounded by the fall in global oil prices since mid – 2014 (Onuoha, 2016). Although it is unlikely that the region will witness the intensity of the 2006-2009 militancy, it is obvious

that the use of force as a mechanism has always compounded rather than doused protracted oil resource conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Conclusion

Having critically examined the dynamics of the Niger Delta conflict vis-à-vis the approach of the Nigerian State, it is obvious that despite the vast oil wealth emanating from the Niger Delta which feeds the entire nation, the region still counts among the catalogue of the poorest and least developed regions in Nigeria. The current desire by President Buhari to use military force to restore stability in the Niger Delta in order to ensure steady revenue inflow to the Government maybe ill-advised. Though the military has dispatched reinforcement to the region but has continued to witness counter offensive from the dreaded NDA, it is in the light of the above, that informed the British Foreign Minister, Philip Hammond to admonish President Buhari to avoid a military confrontation that could end the disaster. Indeed, the renewed violence has not only undermined electricity generation across the Country but has also impacted on the maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. In all, the continuity of heavy military operation in the Niger Delta by the Buhari led government could jeopardise Nigerian economy and resurrect violence in the oil- rich region that has enjoyed relative peace sequel to the amnesty programme which has continue to keep militant leaders out of the creeks and water ways of the Niger Delta since 2009. It is in the best interest of the Nigerian State to address all outstanding grievances and instil a sense of belonging in the people.

Recommendations

- i. The Nigerian State should de-emphasise and roll back the use of lethal force as the best approach to solve the age long oil resource conflict in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. In essence, what is sinequanon is aggressive development of the region to match up with the standards of what is obtainable in oil bearing regions in other countries.
- ii. It is expedient for Nigerian legal system in relation to oil exploration and exploitation to reverse the unfortunate scenario whereby oil companies take advantage of the country's weak laws to completely avoid responsibility for the environmental damage.
- iii. The reluctance shown over the years by the federal government towards Ogoni land clean-up does not portray genuine peace intention for the Niger Delta. Thus, government should mobilise fund to ensure a timely and successful clean-up of Ogoni land and other associated parts of the Niger Delta.
- iv. There is an urgent need for the restructuring of the country so that the federating units would have more autonomy (self-rule) to harness and manage all kinds of

- resources in their various domains. When this is done there would be health competition amongst the federating units in terms of pursuit of development.
- v. The political class and other Niger Delta elites also have to be accountable for the derivation funds and billions of naira accruing to the oil producing states from the Federation Account. Indeed, misappropriation and corruption are still ingrained among the elites of the region while poverty and unemployment remain endemic among the people.
 - vi. In all, there is a dire need for an institutionalized democratic resource governance that will address the agitations across the country for fair share of oil proceeds, fiscal autonomy, and balanced federal structure.

References

- Adedeji A. (1969). *Nigerian Federal Finance*. London: Hutchinson,
- Aja, A.A. (2007). *Basic Concepts, Issues and Strategies of Peace and Conflict Resolution: Nigeria-African Conflict Case Studies*. Enugu: Kenny and Brothers Enterprise (Nig.).
- Akanmu, J.O., Eluwa, O., & Ekpo, I. (2013). *Chronicles OF River Basin Management* Available at [www.chronicles of river basin management in Nigeria](http://www.chroniclesofriverbasinmanagement.com). International congress on river basin management.com. Accessed July, 24, 2017.
- Akinwumi, O (2004). *Crises and conflicts in Nigeria: a political history since 1960*. London: Transaction.
- Ako, R. & Okonmah, P. (2009). Minority Rights Issues in Nigeria: A Theoretical Analysis of Historical and Contemporary Conflicts in the Oil-Rich Niger Delta Region, *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 1, 53-65.
- Amuwo K, Agbale A, Suberu R, Herault G. (1998). *Federalism and Political Restructuring in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books, s
- Akpomuvie, O. (2011). Breaking Barriers to Transformation of the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria: A Human Development Paradigm, *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 1 (3). ISSN 1913-9063
- Ayoade, J.A.A. (2001). The changing structure of Nigerian Federalism. In Elaigwu, J.I. & Akindele, R.A. (eds). *Foundations of Nigerian federalism: 1960-1965*. Jos: Institute of Governance and Social Research (IGSR)
- Babalola D. (2015). The Efficacy of Federalism in a Multi-Ethnic State: The Nigerian Experience. *Journal of Pan-African Studies*, 8(2): 74-92.
- Cajetan, I. (2008). An Ethical evaluation of militant uprising in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. International Conference on the Nigerian State;

- Oilindustry and the Niger Delta, Conference Proceedings (pp.587). Port Harcourt: Harey Publications Company.
- Constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria (1963). Lagos: Government Printer.
- Constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria (1979). Lagos: Government Printer.
- Constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria (1999). Lagos: Government Printer.
- Dode, R.O. (2005). Fiscal Federalism and Social Conflicts in the Niger Delta. *African Conflict Profile; Journal of the Centre for Ethnic and Conflict Studies*. University of Port Harcourt, 1(2).
- Dode, R.O. (2017) & Egugbo, C.C (2017) Emergence of Oil and the Dynamics of Violence in the Niger Delta: Remote and Immediate Causes. *Studies in Politics and Society*, 1(5), December. *A Journal of the Nigerian Political Science Association*
- Ewetan O.O. & Ese U. (2015). Insecurity and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable. Development. Studies*. 5(1): 40-63.
- Mbanefoh, G.A & Egwaikhide F.O. (2003). Revenue Allocation in Nigeria: Derivation Principle Revisited. In Amuwo K. et al (eds). *Federalism and political restructuring in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Mbeke-Ekanem, T. (2000). *Beyond the Execution: understanding the ethnic and military Politics in Nigeria*. U.S.A: Inland Publication, Company.
- Nwabueze B. (2007). *The Judiciary as the third estate of the realm*. Ibadan: Gold Press Limited.
- Nwosu, I.J.D. (2009). Marginality and the Niger Delta Crisis: Ogoni, Ijaw and Warri Crises in Perspective in M. Ikejiani-Clark (ed.) *Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria: A Reader*, Ibadan, Spectrum Books Limited.
- Obi C.I (2003). The impact of oil on Nigeria's revenue allocation system: problems and prospects for national reconstruction. In Amuwo K. et al (eds). *Federalism and political restructuring in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Ojo, E. (2010). The Politics of Revenue Allocation and Resource Control in Nigeria: Implications of Federal Stability. *Fed. Gov.*; 7(1): 4-5.
- Ojo, E.O. (2006). *Challenges of Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria*. Ibadan, Nigeria: John Archers (Publishers) Limited.
- Olowononi, G.D. (2003). Revenue Allocation and Economics of Federalism. In Amuwo K. et al (eds). *Federalism and political restructuring in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Oluruntimehin, B.O. & Ayoade, I.A.A. (2002). *An Over view of Conflicts in Nigeria:1984- 2000*. Ibadan: Development Policy Centre.

- Onuoha F.C. (2016). The Resurgence of Militancy in Nigeria's Oil- Rich Niger Delta and the Dangers of Militarization. Aljazeera Centre for Studies. Available Online at www.studies.aljazeera.net
- Onuoha J, & Nwanegbo CJ. (2007). *Theory and Practice of Intergovernmental Relations in Nigeria*. Enugu, Nigeria: Quintagon Publishers.
- Owugah, L. (2008). The Niger Delta Conflict: resource control and revolutionary violence. International Conference on the Nigerian State, Oil industry and the Niger Delta, Conference Proceedings. Port Harcourt: Harey Publications Company.
- Oyedeji B. (2016). Managing Nigeria without Oil. *International Journal of Innovative, Legal & Political Studies*, 4(3): 1-16.
- Report of the Presidential Committee on the Review of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2001). (Amendment Bill, 2001). Abuja: Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, Vol. I & II. February.
- Suberu R. (2001). *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*. Washington: US Institute of Peace Press,
- Suberu R. (2004). Pseudo-Federalism and the political Crisis of Revenue Allocation. In Aghaje A (ed.): *A festschrift for Oyeleye Oyediran*, University Press, Ibadan.
- The United Nations Human Development Programme Report (2008). Vanguard Newspaper, June 11, p.6.